

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENNA 07369 161537Z

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7601

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL VIENNA 07369

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, AU

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: AUSTRIAN UN AMBASSADOR

DR. THOMAS KLESTIL

1. DR. THOMAS KLESTIL (PHONETIC:KLES-TEEL) WAS APPOINTED AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN JULY 1978.

2. FROM 1974 UNTIL 1978, AMBASSADOR KLESTIL SERVED AS DIRECTOR IN THE SPECIAL SECTION OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS CALLED "INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NOTABLY HEADQUARTERS QUESTIONS." IN THAT CAPACITY HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING PLANS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF VIENNA AS A HEADQUARTERS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND A SITE OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. THE MAJOR ELEMENT OF THE PLAN WAS CONSTRUCTION OF THE DONAU PARK COMPLEX, WHICH AUSTRIA WILL GIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY IN 1979 TO HOUSE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN VIENNA.

3. IN PARTICULAR, KLESTIL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTER-NATIONAL LOBBYING EFFORTS TO SECURE TRANSFER OF U.N. UNITS FROM NEW YORK AND GENEVA TO FILL THE AMBITIOUS DONAU PARK COMPLEX -- TERMED "U.N. CITY" -- WHICH HAD BECOME A CONTROVERSIAL DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE IN AUSTRIA. LARGELY TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE EFFORTS, KLESTIL SERVED AS AUSTRIAN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENNA 07369 161537Z

OBSERVER OR DELEGATE TO NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, INCLUDING THE COLOMBO SUMMIT AND NEW DELHI FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCES OF THE NONALIGNED, THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE IN RIO, THE VANCOUVER HABITAT CONFERENCE, AND UN GENERAL ASSEMBLIES IN NEW YORK. HE ALSO HEADED BILATERAL MISSIONS TO NAIROBI, CAIRO, TEHRAN AND WASHINGTON WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVE IN MIND.

4. KLESTIL WAS HIGHLY ENERGETIC, PERSISTENT, PERSUASIVE AND SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING AUSTRIAN OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO DONAU PARK, AND IN THE COURSE OF THAT WORK HE DEVELOPED EXTREMELY WIDE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH HIGH-LEVEL DIPLOMATS OF MANY NATIONS AS WELL AS WITH OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS. THIS SHOULD BE OF GREAT USE TO HIM AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

5. KLESTIL, WHO IS 46 YEARS OLD, RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES IN VIENNA, AFTER WHICH HE SERVED IN THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC COORDINATION, 1957-59; ON THE AUSTRIAN PERMANENT DELEGATION TO THE OECD IN PARIS, 1959-62; IN THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY AT WASHINGTON, 1962-66; AS SECRETARY TO THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR, 1966-69; AND AS CONSUL GENERAL AT LOS ANGELES, 1969-74.

6. KLESTIL SPEAKS FONDLY OF HIS MANY YEARS IN WASHINGTON AND LOS ANGELES, AND THERE IS IN HIM A LOT OF THE OPEN, FRIENDLY MANNER OF THE AMERICAN EVEN THOUGH HE APPEARS AT FIRST GLANCE TO BE THE TYPICALLY RESERVED BUT CORRECT AUSTRIAN DIPLOMAT. KLESTIL'S DYNAMIC ENTHUSIASM FOR THE U.N. CITY PROJECT SOMETIMES LED HIM TO BE A SLIGHTLY OVER-AGGRESSIVE CONVERSATIONALIST, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT THIS

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 07369 161537Z

TRAIT TO BE TONED DOWN IN HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT.

7. KLESTIL'S POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS ARE WITH THE CONSERVATIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY, WHICH CAUSED SOME PROBLEMS FOR HIS ASSIGNMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS AMBASSADOR. HE WAS, HOWEVER, CLEARLY THE MOST QUALIFIED APPLICANT FOR THE POSITION AND, ACCORDING TO THE MFA PERSONNEL RULES WITH WHICH KLESTIL HIMSELF WAS INTIMATELY CONCERNED AS THE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DENY HIM THE APPOINTMENT.

8. KLESTIL'S WIFE, EDITH-MARIA, IS PARISIAN. THEY HAVE THREE CHILDREN, URSULA (19), THOMAS (16), AND STEFAN (11), ALL OF WHOM ATTENDED AMERICAN SCHOOLS WHILE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WHO, LIKE THEIR PARENTS, SPEAK GERMAN, ENGLISH AND FRENCH FLUENTLY.

9. KLESTIL'S FAVORITE PASTIMES ARE TENNIS AND SKIING. AN EMBASSY OFFICER WHO HAS PLAYED TENNIS WITH KLESTIL RATES HIM AS "AN AVERAGE CLUB PLAYER WITH PASSABLE GROUND STROKES, BUT WEAK ON THE VOLLEY." WOLF

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